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**What is mentoring?**

Mentoring offers professionally focused development for artists. It opens the potential for knowledge sharing and gives artists the opportunity to observe and formally review aspects of their own practice in action. Mentoring can involve a mentor/ mentee relationship which brings an experienced artist together with a less experienced artist, to guide and support their creative process.

The following guidelines were drawn from other mentoring models. They are merely intended to be loose guidelines and are by no means definitive. Each mentoring relationship is unique and must be driven by the needs as defined by the participants.

There are **three basic guidelines**, which apply to mentor and mentee:

1. That there is a shared desire to be in a mentoring relationship.

2. That the boundaries between mentor and mentee are clearly set out and understood.

3. That there is honesty, confidentiality and trust on both sides.

**Mentee’s Responsibilities**

The onus is on the mentee to drive the relationship in order to feed the mentor with challenges/issues/materials to which s/he can respond. Therefore, the mentee should clearly define the parameters of their professional ‘need’. Other responsibilities include:

• To adhere to any deadlines agreed and set.

• To ensure that any necessary materials to be considered at the next meeting is with the mentor at least 5 days prior to the meeting to allow the mentor space to formulate a meaningful response.

• To be respectful of the mentor’s time and obligation.

• To be flexible in terms of travelling to meet with the mentor.

• To be open to coming out of one’s comfort zone and to take risks.

• To have the desire and ability to learn new things about your practice and yourself.

• To be willing to take constructive criticism.

**Mentor’s Responsibilities**

A mentor bears witness in the development of the mentee’s vision and shares in certain elements of it. Other responsibilities include:

• To act as a sounding board and advisor to the mentee
(rather than a “teacher”).

• To help define the goals and strategies that will help and challenge the mentee.

• To act as an objective eye and to encourage independence.

• To vary styles of relating to the mentee according to their needs, ranging from directive to non-directive, encouraging the mentee “to become the artist they want to be”.

• To provide a sense of support and affirmation to the mentee.

• To give a constructive critical response to the mentee’s materials.

• To monitor that the relationship is resulting in meaningful development – is the mentee making progress?

• To be flexible in terms of travelling to meetings and taking into consideration at all times the mentee’s access requirements.

**Additional Information**

1. Meeting spaces – We suggest that you meet in a neutral space initially until you become comfortable with one another (unless it is necessary to be in a working space).

2. Length of meetings – It is up to you to negotiate the length of the meetings but we would suggest between one and three hours as a general guideline.

3. Development of relationship – the relationship between mentor and mentee is likely to be stronger towards the end of your time together rather than at the start. It may be useful to remember this when planning meetings.

**Connect Mentoring Programme**

These guidelines have been distilled from a document drawn up by ADI and Fire Station Artists’ Studios using resources drawn from Connect Mentoring Programme which was funded by the Arts Council and delivered by Create and Common Ground in 2009-10.

Copies of the **Connect Mentoring Programme** (Booklet and DVD) are available from Create. Call the Create office (01-473-6600) or email info@create-ireland.ie to request a copy. To read comments by mentors and mentees using the Connect Mentoring Programme visit the Connect blog: <http://connectprogramme.wordpress.com/>